

AN EPISTLE

OF
LOVE

AND
Good Advice,

To the People of the Lord every where.

Dear Friends,

WHO are broken off from the
Wild Olive, and grafted into
the Heavenly Vine, it is unto
you my Love and Life flows, with an ear-
nest travel upon my Spirit, that as ye have
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known the watering Showers of the Lord's Heavenly Rain to fall upon you, ye may not only Budd and Blossom, but bring forth much Fruit, to the Praise and Glory of your Heavenly Father, to whom be Dominion and Honour for ever and ever.

And now, Dear Friends, who in measure have escaped the Pollutions of this World, and in all your sojourning in the Way to Sion, have had a Godly Care upon your Minds to cease from doing Evil, that ye may know a learning to do well, is what I would remind you of; and not to rest satisfied, in that ye are come by the Teachings of God's Grace, to eschew Evil, but also that ye are found doing Good; knowing that it is the Fruitless Trees that canber the Ground: It is high time for all to awake unto Righteousness, for many are called to awake from Unrighteousness, which is well so far; but what will this avail, if Fruits of Righteousness be not brought forth? For as it is written, *The Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, that the Tree which brings not forth good Fruit, may be hewen down and cast into the Fire:* And therefore it is greatly needful to abide in the Vine, into which ye are already grafted, that fruitful Branches
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ye may be, like *Joseph* of Old, whose Branches spread over the Wall.

And Friends, Let none sit down at ease in the way to Sion, like some of old, who begun well, and run well for a time, and sat down short of the true Rest : Or like the young Man that came unto Christ Jesus, who had kept the Commandments from his Youth, yet wanted one thing ; and not given up to follow the Lord fully, sat down short of laying up Heavenly Treasure. And therefore let all follow the Lord fully, who is the Captain of our Salvation, and great Bishop and Shepherd of the Soul, who leads his Sheep into green Pastures, feeds his Flocks as by the still Waters, and gives unto his Eternal Life.

Let every ones Eye be Single unto the Lord, that the whole Body may be full of Light ; such it is whose Understandings the Lord doth open ; they see their Duty unto God, and their Duty one unto another.

It is therefore now time for all that profess the true and living Faith, that purifies the Heart, and works by Love, to come forth and shew themselves, and walk in the Light of the new *Jerusalem*, where Presi-

dent is going before Precept, Example before Doctrine, and Actions and Doings, before Words and Testimonies; and on this wise the Lord is greatly at work in the Hearts of his People, to make them exemplary to others in the way to Sion, where the Saints Solemnity is met with.

And now, Dear Friends, who have given up your selves to follow the Lamb in the way of Regeneration, and in some measure have known your Garments washed: Ye are to hold on your way, for the Mark is before: Such it is the Lord is drawing near unto, teaching them to lay up Heavenly Treasure. It is the Lord that teaches his People to profit, and such comes to see in the Light of the Lord, that makes manifest the Will and Mind of God to Mankind, that it is not enough to Glorifie God in your Bodies and Spirits, which are the Lord's, which is well so far, but we are to serve the Lord, with what we may receive from his bountiful hand, of his outward Mercies, which many are made large Stewards of: Remember *Cornelius* his Prayers and Alms were accepted, and ascended up for a Memorial before the Lord, to his great Comfort and future Happiness, and drew down a Blessing upon his Household:
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And being that to do good, and to communicate, is such a needful Duty, there is surely need to charge them, who are Rich in this World, not to trust in uncertain Riches, but to trust in the Living God, who will call all Men to an account of their Stewardship one day, for what we enjoy it is the Lord's ; therefore all that would be clear in the day of their account, they are to wait for the Lord's ordering hand to be near them, who opened the Heart of *Lydia* ; and when opened, her Service was to invite the Lord's People into her House, which being done in a right mind, brings a Blessing ; and such lose not their Reward.

And as it is the good Reward that attends the good Work, it hath been much upon my Mind of late, to remind the Lord's People to do good unto all, but more especially the Household of Faith ; and that all such who may have much of the outward *Mammon* committed to their trust, not to be short of Feeding the Hungry, Cloathing the Naked, Entertaining Strangers, Visiting the Sick, and them that are in Prison, which must needs be a necessary Duty, being the Lord takes it as done unto himself : And that none of the Lord's People may be found wanting in the day of their account, let it

be the care of all, who expect a good Reward from the hand of the Lord, to Sow plentifully, that they may Reap plentifully; for they that Sow sparingly, saith the Apostle, shall Reap sparingly; and the time drawing near that every one must receive a Reward according to their Works; What will it profit any then, if they could have gained the whole World, and lose their own Soul? For as it is written, *When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory. And before him shall be gathered all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats: And he shall set the Sheep on his right hand, but the Goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World. For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat: I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink: I was a Stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was Sick, and ye Visited me: I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the Righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an Hungred, and Fed thee? Or Thirsty, and gave thee Drink? When saw we thee a Stranger, and took thee in? Or Naked,*
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and Clothed thee? Or when saw we thee Sick, or in Prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it to the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he also say to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye Cursed, into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me no Meat: I was Thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink: I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not: Sick, and in Prison, and ye Visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an Hungred, or a Thirst, or a Stranger, or Naked, or Sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment: But the Righteous into Life Eternal. And therefore, that none may rest satisfied in Feeding, Cloathing, and taking care of themselves, in Sicknels, &c. supposing to lay up durable Riches, and yet is unmindful of the Poor, the Widow, and the Fatherless, such may do well to make a narrow search, and consider whether they are come to that Religion which is pure and undefiled,

that is, to Visit the Fatherless, and the Widow, in their Affliction; and to keep unspotted of the World.

And now, my Dear Friends, in this calm time of Ease and outward Liberty, which the Lord's Faithful People greatly prizes, as a Mercy from the Lord's bountiful hand, Beware of the Enemy of the Soul, that lies near to draw the Minds of Men and Women to love the World, and the things of this World; *For whosoever loveth the World, the Love of the Father is not in them;* and this unwearied Adversary, whose Transformings is great, would come in under pretence of being a Friend, but in the Light of the Lord is seen to be a devouring Enemy; not leading at first into open Profaneness, for many are dead to the gross Evils that is in the World, but rather into earthly mindedness, where little Fruit is brought forth that is well pleasing unto the Lord; and his end is to Waste and Destroy the Heritage of the Lord: Ought not all to Pray as their flight hath not been in Winter, that it may not be on the Sabbath-Day, *for many are Called, but few are Chosen?* And as the Lord in his Mercy hath freed us of many Burdens, our Elder Brethren bore in the Heat of the Day, the Memorial

Memorial whereof is sweet unto the Living, who gave *their Cheek to the Smiter,* and *their Head to him that pulled off the Hair;* and that which they enjoyed to day, they could not call their own to Morrow; whose Innocent Sufferings took deep Impression upon many People, and largely manifested their Love to God, and Looseness to the World; and many came to see that the Lord's People were diligent in Labouring in the outward Creation, that they might not be chargeable to others; yet willing to give up their all, when called thereunto, to suffer for his Name sake; and here their Light shined to the Admiration of many, that great is become the Gatherings of the Lord's People, who through many Tribulations enter the Kingdom, and whose care is to lay up durable Riches.

And now, that it may be the care of all such who may not be called to give up their all, and so manifest their Love to God, and Looseness to the World, in suffering for his Name sake, to be found in the doing part, that there may be a delight in doing Good, and shewing Mercy; and that saying may be fulfilled, *If thine Enemy Hunger, Feed him; if he Thirst, give him*

him to Drink; and then, no doubt but there will be a feeding one another; and here it is made manifest who they are that loves Enemies, and such must of necessity love one another, and forgive one another, as the Lord, for Christ's sake, forgave us.

And, dear Friends, it is our Loosness to the World, and the things of this World, that makes fruitful, as we abide in the Heavenly Vine; and no doubt but if there be such a true care as there ought to be, to shew forth the Lord's Praise, who hath called us to Glory and Vertue; but the Lord will open the Eyes of many to see our Love to God, and Loosness to the World, in this calm time, that many shall say, These People are Diligent and Laborious in all their Undertakings, yet they exceed many of their equals in Hospitality, in dispersing abroad, and giving to the Poor; which being done in a right Mind, always was, and still is, a good Work, being done so as that they that did it, their end was not to be seen of Men, for if so, such have their Reward; but if done so, as that the left hand may not know what the right hand doth, the Lord, who sees in secret, will reward such openly.

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And now, my dearly beloved Friends, whom the Lord hath given Gifts unto, and are become Planters, and Waterers, in his holy Hand, whose Service is great in the Church, to the bringing of many from far, near unto the Lord, that such may do their Day's work faithfully, that there may not be a coming short of the Crown in the end, is the weighty Concern that ought to remain upon the Minds of all such, and there may be a readiness and a willingness at all times to answer the Lord's requirings, and to shew forth a good Example unto all, in keeping clear of these unnecessary Intanglements of this Life, that may hurt their Service in the Church, remembring the saying of the wise Apostle, *No Man that Warreth, intangleth himself with the affairs of this Life;* but rather conclude with the Apostle, when he writes to *Timothy*, *For we brought nothing (says he) into this World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having Food and Rayment, let us be therewith content.* Signifying how the *Love of Money* is the root of all Evil; which while some Men coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows. But thou, O Man of God, flee these things, and follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Meekness: Charging him in the sight of God, and before Jesus

Jesus Christ, that thou keep this Commandment, (says he) without Spot, Unrebuicable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his time he shall shew, who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, &c. to whom be Honour and Power Everlasting. Amen.

And, Dear Friends, as there is diversities of Gifts, by one and the same Spirit, that the Members of that Holy Body, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, have their several Services in the Body, that many are become in the Lord's hand, as Pruners, and Diggers, in his Vineyard, that such may do their Day's work faithfully, and as I have already said, The old Enemy is greatly at work, to lead into Earthly-mindedness, and though little Fruit is brought forth by such, that is well pleasing unto the Lord; yet superfluous Branches grows naturally, Where there is a being often watered; what must be done to the fruitless Trees, that cumber the Ground? (Shall they be cut down?) It is written, *A certain Man had a Figg-tree planted in his Vineyard, and he came and sought Fruit thereon, and found none; then said he to the Dresser of his Vineyard, Behold, these three Years I come seeking Fruit of this Figg-tree, and find none; cut it down, Why cumbereth it the Ground?*

Ground? And he answered, and said unto him, Lord, let it alone this Year also, till I shall Dig about it, and Dung it, and if it bear Fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. So it appears the fruitless Trees are not to be let alone to cumber the Ground.

And therefore, Men being compared unto Trees, What great need is there for all that profess the Way and Truth of the Lord, to be so fruitful, as that Trees of Righteousness Men may call them; and being the Tree is known by the Fruit, that such Fruit may be brought forth by all the Lord's People every where, as will demonstrate that they are the Branches of the Heavenly Vine: And on this wise the Apostle Peter exhorted the Believers, who having escaped the Corruption that is in the World, through Lust: *And besides this (saith he) giving all Diligence, add to your Faith, Vertue; and to Vertue, Knowledge; and to your Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, Brotherly Kindness; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity:* And being what is aimed at in the whole matter herein contained, that all may be found in these things that makes neither Barren nor Unfruitful, in the knowledge
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of our Lord Jesus Christ; But he that lacketh these things (saith the Apostle) is blind, and cannot see as far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old Sins; wherefore I shall conclude with the saying of the Apostle, I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present Truth: Yea (says he) I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in Remembrance.

In a feeling of that divine Sweetness, and array of God's Glory, that covers the Souls of the Righteous, do I unfeignedly Salute all that are sojourning in the way to Sion, sincerely desiring your happy and safe arrival at that Eternal Rest, where the Righteous shall ever live to Praise and Magnifie the Worthy Name of the Lord God, and the Lamb, that Sits upon the Throne, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

By a Lover of Truth and Righteousness,

Christopher Story.

Righead, in Cumberland,
the 5th of the 11th
Month, 1699.

